

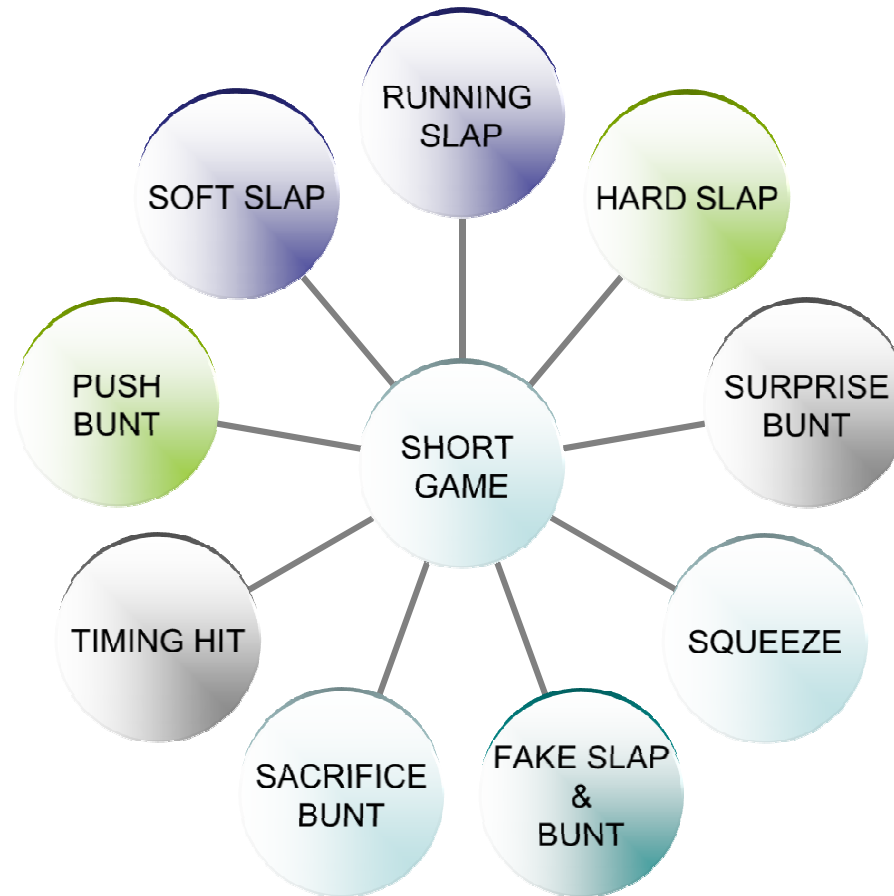


SHORT GAME

by Lilly Rossetti



ELEMENTS OF SHORT GAME



FACTORS OF SUCCESS

SUCCESS DEPENDS ON THE FOLLOWING FACTORS :

1. CLEAR STRATEGIC GOAL

= the goals and the priorities of the play must be clear

2. CORRECT READING OF THE SITUATION

= defense positioning, behaviours and habits of defensive players, their skills and abilities in terms of quickness, throwing, efficiency, accuracy, possible weaknesses

3. CORRECT EXECUTION OF FUNDAMENTALS BY THE HITTER-RUNNER

4. CORRECT EXECUTION OF THE RUNNING FUNDAMENTAL SKILLS BY THE BASERUNNER

FEATURES OF SHORT GAME

- pressure on the defense => forcing mistakes
- opportunity to create game situations with less powerful players
- more opportunities to put runners on base
- more opportunities to move runners on
- possibility to take advantage of positioning of the opponent defense

FURTHER FEATURES

- utmost flexibility => several combinations possible
- greater chance to look for defensive weaknesses
- higher percentage of contact with the ball and higher probability to put the ball in play
- playing opportunities against dominant pitchers
- opportunity for the defense to get ready for similar plays

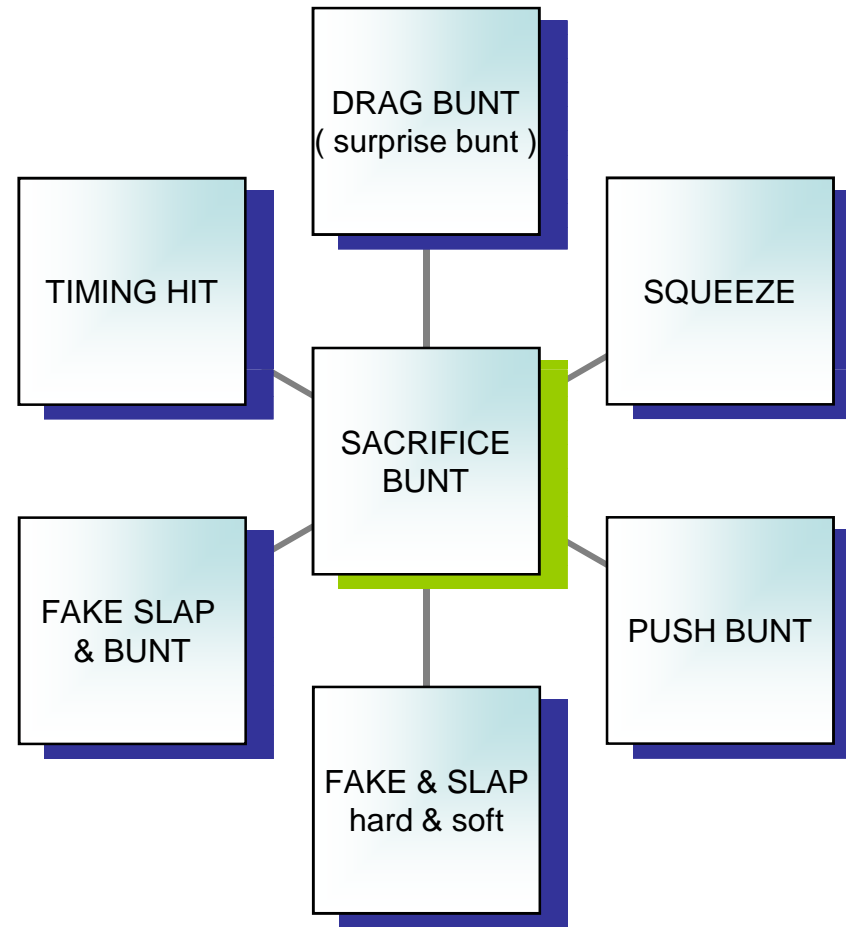
NEGATIVE ASPECTS

- it turns out to be a problem for players without all variables => predictable !
- it requires good eye on the ball and good bat control, discipline, body control and focusing
- it often turns into an easy out
- it can be neutralized by a solid and expert defense
- scoring a run is often the result of more than one successful plays or of defensive errors
- when behind in the score it is not easy to come back
- it must be combined with a good pitching mound to be able to dominate a tight game
- it can possibly lead to outs by rule

THE RIGHT SIDE



EVOLUTIONS OF SACRIFICE BUNT



The starting position for all these variations should be the same as for the sacrifice bunt

→ only this way the defense will be disoriented and our strategy successful

SACRIFICE BUNT

- position in the batter's box
- balance and weight distribution
- angle and height of the bat
- hand distance from the body
- plate coverage
- position of the eyes in relation to the bat
- pitch selection
- soft hands !
- good job !

SURPRISE BUNT

- getting into bunting position at release
- looking for defensive weaknesses
- priority for the hitter-runner
- pitch selection : only for strikes

SQUEEZE BUNT

- getting into bunting position early enough to be sure to control the pitch
- avoiding to get into bunting position too early not to provoke the reaction of the pitcher and the defense
- executed on any pitch
- utmost responsibility of the hitter-runner :
protecting the runner on third stealing home
- priority: dumping the ball away from the catcher

PUSH BUNT

- same technique as sacrifice bunt until the moment of contact with the ball
- opposite technique as sacrifice bunt at contact = hard , pushing hands !
- looking for paths between pitcher and corner infielders

SLAPS

- starting with a fake bunt and developing a hard solid contact with the ball (not a soft dumping)
- aim : drawing the defense closer as in a sacrifice bunt and then taking them by surprise
- **soft slaps** : soft contact with the ball for a ground hit towards the middle infielders (ideal on low pitches, goal: lots of small bounces)
- **hard slaps** : solid contact with the ball, hit over the infield (if playing close). Effective on high pitches, goal: line-drive over the heads of the infielders
- pitch selection: only on strikes, possibly on the suitable pitch

FAKE SLAP & BUNT

- variations of the previous skills aiming at creating a further combination and avoid predictability
- the bat comes back from the bunting position to the slapping position earlier so that the defense can hesitate for a second and keep their position
- at the latest moment a surprise bunt is executed
- pitch selection: on strikes only

TIMING HIT

- it means tracking the ball from the bunting position to hit the ball, executing a complete hitting motion at the right contact point
- some players find it useful
- it needs good bat control and quick hands, as well as the ability to read the ball well

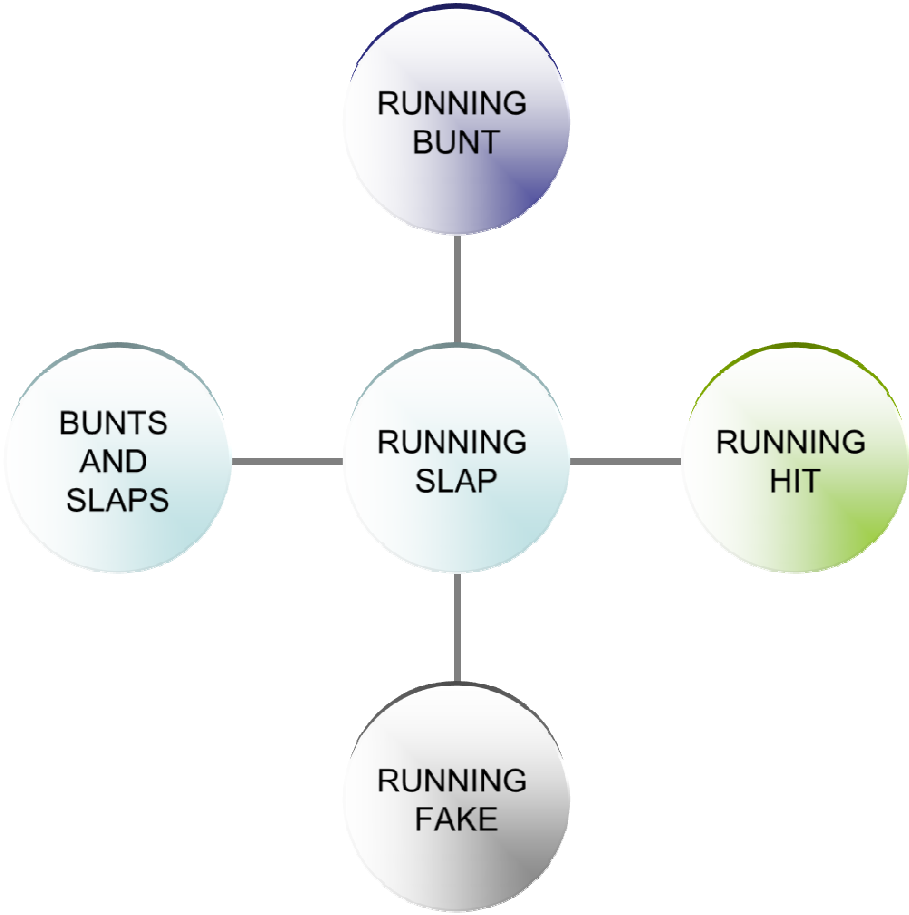
MAIN STRATEGIES

- safety bunt
- bunt and run
- run and bunt
- squeeze play
- covering the steal with fake bunts and fake and slaps

THE LEFT SIDE



EVOLUTIONS OF THE RUNNING SLAP



ADVANTAGES OF LEFT SIDE GAME

- possibility to face dominant pitchers and create game situations
- supporting offense strategy to move runners on by using defensive weaknesses or hesitations
- opportunity for quick hitters-runners to take advantage of one running step less from the left side box

RUNNING SLAP

- position in the batter's box and footwork:
 - 3 steps
 - variation 2 steps and a half
 - variation 1 step and a half
- hands and arms motion :
 - “rolling” the wrists
 - chopping down

BE CAREFUL TO ...

- the running path to the ball
 - when running towards the plate or stepping on it !
 - when running away from the plate, towards 1B !
- weight shift / balance

VARIATIONS OF THE RUNNING SLAP

It is important that footwork and starting position in the box remain the same !

- Running bunt
- Soft slap
- Hard slap
- Running hit

THE BASERUNNER

For every single play we talked about we have different behaviours on the side of the runner

It's important to make clear :

1. Priority for every single play
2. Runner's responsibility
3. Hitter's responsibility
4. Coaching philosophy
5. Possible particular tactical choices in specific situations or against a determined defensive alignment

COMMON DENOMINATORS

For each and every situation make clear :

- ✓ lead-off the base (number of steps)
- ✓ position of the body after the lead
- ✓ way to come back to the base
- ✓ focusing priorities
- ✓ primary and secondary goal of the runner
- ✓ possible risks

SHORT GAME BASERUNNING CHECK-LIST

SIGN	LEAD	FOCUS	GOAL # 1	GOAL # 2	RISK
SACRIFICE BUNT	with the pitch	Bat angle balance	Reaching the base on balls to the ground	Reaching an extra base	-pick-off -flies
SURPRISE BUNT	with the pitch	Bat angle balance	Reaching the base on balls to the ground	Reaching an extra base	-pick-off -flies
SQUEEZE	At release	Bat angle	Stealing on the pitch Scoring	/	-pick-off -flies -bunt to C
PUSH BUNT	with the pitch	Bat angle balance	Reaching the base on balls to the ground	Reaching an extra base	-pick-off - flies - line-drives
FAKE AND SLAP	with the pitch	Bat angle	Reaching the base on balls to the ground	Reaching an extra base	- flies -line-drives
FAKE SLAP AND BUNT	with the pitch	Bat angle	Reaching the base on balls to the ground	Reaching an extra base	- flies -pick-off
RUNNING SLAP	with the pitch	Bat angle	Moving on contact	Reaching an extra base	- flies -line-drives

SUGGESTIONS FOR TRAINING

- work gradually
- learn good sacrifice bunt fundamentals from both sides
- develop bat control
- develop good vision of the ball and effective plate coverage
- work with a progression of drills which emphasize technical fundamentals
- make clear the priorities of every play, the philosophy behind each one of them, the responsibilities involved in the execution
- lead the players to observe the opponent defense and train technique according to different situations

GRADUAL PROGRESSION MEANS :

- drills without a ball
- drills with different training tools
- drills with the ball isolating motions
- repetitions with bat, ball and front toss
- repetitions with pitching machine
- repetitions with live pitching
- repetitions with live pitching, runners
- repetitions with live pitching, counts, game situations



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